Functionalism:

This school attempts to understand why animals and humans have developed psychological aspects that they currently possess.

According to functionalists, the aim of psychology is the study of' 'what for' and 'what of' mental process. It is concerned with the nature and functions of mental processes which emphasizes how these processes works.

The scholars associated with the **founding** of functionalism had no ambition to start a new school of thought. They protested against the restrictions and limitations of Wundt's version of psychology and of Titchener's structuralism, but they did not want to replace these with another formal "ism."

Paradoxically, the formalization of this protest movement was imposed on it by the founder of structuralism: E. B. Titchener. He may have indirectly founded functional psychology when he adopted the word "structural" as opposed to "functional" in an article, "The Postulates of a Structural Psychology," published in the Philosophical Review in 1898. In this article, Titchener pointed out the differences between structural and functional psychology and argued that structuralism was the only proper study for psychology. By establishing functionalism as an opponent, Titchener unwittingly gave it an identity and a status it might otherwise not have attained.

Not all the credit for founding functionalism can go to Titchener, but those psychologists whom history has labeled the founders of functional psychology were reluctant founders, at best. Two psychologists who contributed directly to the founding of the functionalist The Chicago School 149school of thought were John Dewey and James Rowland Angell. In 1894 they arrived at the newly established University of Chicago; later, each appeared on the cover of Time magazine. None other than William James later announced that Dewey and Angell should be considered the founders of the new system, which James designated the "Chicago school"

William James is the forerunner of Funtionalism.

[In **The Principles of Psychology,** James presents what eventually became the central tenet of American functionalism—that the goal of psychology is not the discovery of the elements of experience but rather the study of living people as they adapt to their environment. The function of consciousness is to guide us to those ends required for survival. Consciousness is vital to the needs of complex beings in a complex environment; without it, human evolution could not have occurred. James also emphasized nonrational aspects of human nature. People are creatures of emotion and passion as well as of thought and reason. Even when discussing purely intellectual processes, James stressed the nonrational. He noted that intellect can be affected by the body's physical condition, that beliefs are determined by emotional factors, and that reason and concept formation are influenced by human wants and needs. Thus, James did not consider people to be wholly rational beings. The following sections describe several of the areas James wrote about in The Principles.

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The Subject Matter of Psychology: James defined psychology as the study of mental processes, but such processes take the psychologist into behavioral, physiological, and cultural dimensions. James stated at the beginning of The Principles that "Psychology is the Science of Mental Life, both of its phenomena and their conditions" (James, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 1). In terms of subject matter, the key words are phenomena and conditions. The term phenomena is used to indicate that the subject matter of psychology is to be found in immediate experience; the term conditions refers to the importance of the body, particularly the brain, in mental life.

Radical empiricism: James lamented the misleading nature of brief names, but preferred that his philosophy be called radical empiricism. A fundamental postulate of radical empiricism, according to James (1909/1975a), is "that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience" (p. 6). The term radical means that things that are experienced must not be ignored. It also implies our right to exclude things that are not definable in terms drawn from experience.

Stream of consciousness: James rebelled against the artificiality and narrowness of the Wundtian position. He believed that conscious experiences are simply what they are, and they are not groups or collections of elements. The discovery of discrete elements of consciousness through introspective analysis does not show that these elements exist independently of a trained observer.

According to James, the physical substructures of consciousness form a basic part of psychology. Consciousness must be considered in its natural setting, which is the physical human being. William James's idea that consciousness is a continuous flowing process and that any attempt to reduce it to elements will distort it.

Pragmatism: James emphasized the value for psychology of pragmatism, the basic tenet of which is that the validity of an idea or conception must be tested by its practical consequences. The popular expression of the pragmatic viewpoint is "anything is true if it works." Pragmatism had been advanced in the 1870s by Charles Sanders Peirce, a mathematician and philosopher and a lifelong friend of James. Peirce's work remained largely unrecognized until James wrote a book titled Pragmatism (1907), which formalized the doctrine as a philosophical movement. (It was Peirce who first wrote about the new psychology of Fechner and Wundt in an article published for American scholars in 1869).

In Pragmatism, James (1907/1975b) argued that the monism–pluralism issue is "the deepest and most pregnant question that our minds can frame" (p. 141). Although James was open to the possibility that there may be only one real thing and that all else is derived from that one reality (monism), he was nevertheless a **pluralist** and repeatedly referred to himself in that way.

Self: For James, the self includes the totality of all things that belong to us: friends, children, a home, clothing, a pet, reputation, memory, perception, and a physical structure. He identified three constituents of the self: the material self, the social self, and the spiritual self. In addition to these, and in a class apart, was the pure ego.

((*The material self* consists of everything we call uniquely our own, such as our body, family, home, or style of dress. He thought that our choice of clothing was particularly important.

The social self refers to the recognition we get from other people. James pointed out that we have many social selves; we present different sides of ourselves to different people. For example, you will probably behave differently with parents than with acquaintances or lovers. Each will see you in a different way.

The third component, *the spiritual self*, refers to our inner or subjective being.))

James argued that our self-esteem is a function of the ratio of our success and our pretensions as follows: Self-esteem = Success /Pretensions

Habit: The chapter in The Principles dealing with habit reaffirms James's interest in physiological influences. He describes all living creatures as "bundles of habits" (James, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 104). Repetitive or habitual actions involve the nervous system and serve to increase the plasticity of neural matter. As a result, habits become easier to perform on subsequent repetitions and require less conscious attention.

Emotions: James's original paper, titled "What Is an Emotion," published in 1884, inspired controversy. The reaction to the 1884 paper prompted James to publish another paper in 1894, titled "The Physical Basis of Emotion." The focus of the early papers was on the physiological correlates of emotion, but he explored some of the rich experiential dimensions of emotion in later works. . The theory, advanced independently by Danish physiologist Carl Georg Lange (1834–1900), has come to be called the James–Lange theory of emotion. The James–Lange theory insists that bodily changes precede the experience of emotion. In other words, you see the bear, run, and then experience fear.

Memory: James opened his chapter on memory with a distinction between primary and secondary memory. *Primary memory*, according to James, is memory for the immediate past or the events that have most recently been in consciousness. He believed in a close connection between primary memory and afterimages—a topic of considerable interest in perception research. *Secondary memory*, for James, was memory proper. He defined it as knowledge of previous events that are not currently a part of thought or attention.

James contended that the exercise of memory presupposes two things: first, the retention of a fact, and second, the demonstration of retention through reminiscence, recollection, reproduction, or recall

The Methods of Psychology: To supplement introspective and experimental methods, James recommended the comparative method. By inquiring into the psychological functioning of different populations—such as animals, infants, preliterate peoples, or emotionally disturbed individuals—psychology could uncover meaningful variations in mental life. The methods James cited in The Principles point to a major difference between structural and functional psychologies: The functionalist movement would not be restricted to a single method, such as Wundt's or Titchener's forms of introspection. Functionalism would accept and apply other methods as well. This eclectic approach broadened considerably the scope of American psychology.]

John Dewey (1859–1952)

Regarded by many as America's most important philosopher of education, John Dewey (1859–1952) played a key role in launching functionalism. Dewey's article, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," published in the Psychological Review (1896), was the point of departure for functional psychology. In this important work, Dewey attacked the psychological molecularism, elementism, and reductionism of the reflex arc with its distinction between stimulus and response. The proponents of the reflex arc argued that any unit of behavior ends with the response to a stimulus, such as when a child withdraws his or her hand from a flame. Dewey suggested that the reflex forms more of a circle than an arc because the child's perception of the flame changes, thus serving a different function. Therefore, perception and movement (stimulus and response) must be considered as a unit and not as a composition of individual sensations and responses.

Thus, Dewey was arguing that the behavior involved in a reflexive response cannot be meaningfully reduced to basic sensorimotor elements any more than consciousness can be meaningfully analyzed into elementary component parts. Dewey noted that behavior should be treated not as an artificial scientific construct but rather in terms of its significance to the organism adapting to its environment. Dewey concluded that the proper subject matter for psychology had to be the study of the total organism as it functions in its environment.

((Dewey believed that the educational system should respect individuality but at the same time should challenge our ethnocentrism. He opposed mere imitation, regimentation, and rote learning. Such learning, he felt, prepares us not for democracy but for totalitarianism.)) Dewey was a premier figure in the founding of functionalism and progressive education.

James Rowland Angell (1869–1949):

James Rowland Angell molded the functionalist movement into a working school of thought. He made the psychology department at the University of Chicago the most influential of its day. It became the major training ground for functional psychology.

Angell then described the three major themes of the functionalist movement:

1. Functional psychology is the psychology of mental operations, in contrast to structuralism, which is the psychology of mental elements. Titchener's elementistic approach still had its supporters, and Angell was promoting functionalism in direct opposition to it. The task of functionalism is to discover how a mental process operates, what it accomplishes, and under what conditions it occurs.
2. Functional psychology is the psychology of the fundamental utilities of consciousness. Thus, consciousness is viewed in a utilitarian spirit as it mediates between the needs of the organism and the demands of the environment. Structures and functions of the organism exist because they allow the organism to adapt to its environment and thus to survive. Angell suggested that because consciousness has survived, it must therefore perform some essential service for the organism. Functional psychologists needed to discover precisely what this service was, not only for consciousness but also for more specific mental processes, such as judging and willing.
3. Functional psychology is the psychology of psychophysical relations (mind-body relations) and is concerned with the total relationship of the organism to its environment. Functionalism encompasses all mind-body functions and recognizes no real distinction between mind and body. It considers them as belonging to the same order and assumes an easy transfer from one to the other.

Harvey Carr:

Carr elaborated on Angell's theoretical position. His work represents functionalism when it no longer needed to crusade against structuralism. Functionalism had bested the opposition and become a recognized position in its own right. Under Carr, functionalism at Chicago reached its peak as a formal system. Carr maintained that functional psychology was the American psychology. Because Carr's textbook, Psychology (1925), presents functionalism in its most refined form, it is important for us to consider two of its major points:

Carr defined the **subject matter of psychology** as mental activity—processes such as memory, perception, feeling, imagination, judgment, and will. • The function of mental activity is to acquire, fixate, retain, organize, and evaluate experiences and to use these experiences to determine one's actions. Carr called the specific form of action in which mental activities appear "adaptive" or "adjustive" behavior.

Robert sessions Woodworth :

One of the essential features of functionalism is that it broadened the scope of psychological inquiry. Both basic and applied problems were legitimate and there was an extension of research into areas such as learning and motivation. Robert Sessions Woodworth (1869–1962) became a key figure in the subject area of motivation.